

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A user authentication method for an authentication server which executes user authentication between a mobile information terminal and a content providing server interconnected by an open network, comprising ~~the steps of:~~

registering, at an authentication server from the mobile information terminal, unique identification information corresponding to ~~the hardware of said a~~ mobile information terminal ~~with a customer database of said authentication server in advance, wherein said unique identification information is stored in said mobile information terminal and comprises information related to a manufacturer of the mobile information terminal;~~

presenting, from the authentication server to said mobile information terminal, a recommended menu including a plurality of official site access information for accessing predetermined content providing servers, respectively;

receiving, at the authentication server from said mobile information terminal, the unique identification information and a request for registering one of said official site access information for accessing said content providing server with a personal menu via ~~a the open~~ network;

determining, at the authentication server, whether said unique identification information received from said mobile information terminal is registered with said customer database;

sending a notification from the authentication server to said content providing server by which said requested site is produced, that starting of service provision for said mobile information terminal be permitted, if the unique identification information is found registered with said customer database ~~in the determining step~~;

registering, at the authentication server, said requested official site access information with said personal menu after receiving an acknowledgement response of said notification from said content providing server; and

notifying, to said mobile information terminal from said authentication server, a completion of said registration;

~~wherein a process in which site access information selected by a user of said mobile information terminal from said recommended menu displayed on said mobile information terminal is registered with said customer database in relation with the unique identification information of said mobile information terminal during the registering step.~~

Claim 2 (Canceled)

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The user authentication method according to claim 1, wherein,

~~in the registering step, when registering said site access information with said customer database, user authentication is performed on the basis of said unique identification information before this registration and said mobile information terminal is requested to make display for prompting said user to enter a password of the user, while, if, subsequent to the registration with said customer database, an access request is made on the basis of the site access information already registered with said customer database, the user authentication on the basis of said unique identification information is performed but the request for the display for prompting the user to enter the user's password is omitted.~~

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The user authentication method according to claim 3, wherein,

in the registering step, a charging server is instructed to charge said user for the use of a service provided by said content providing server associated with said site access information at the time of registering said site access information ~~with said customer database.~~

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The user authentication method according to claim 4, wherein,

in the registering step, a confirmation step for confirming, before instructing said charging server for the charging, that said user is a registered user of said charging server is included.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The user authentication method according to claim 1, wherein

said open network is the Internet, through which the unique identification information is transmitted as encrypted by ~~a~~ the predetermined encryption algorithm by a Web browser installed on said mobile information terminal.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The user authentication method according to claim 6, wherein

the unique identification information is read, by said Web browser, from a flash memory installed on said mobile information terminal and the retrieved unique identification information is transmitted as encrypted by the predetermined encryption algorithm by said Web browser.

Claim 8 (Original): The user authentication method according to claim 7, wherein

said predetermined encryption algorithm is SSL (Secure Socket Layer).

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): A user authentication server which executes user authentication between a mobile information terminal and a content providing server interconnected by an open network, comprising:

~~registering means for registering unique identification information corresponding to the hardware of said mobile information terminal received from the mobile information terminal with a customer database of said authentication server in advance, wherein said unique identification information is stored in said mobile information terminal and comprises information related to a manufacturer of the mobile information terminal;~~

~~presenting means for presenting, to said mobile information terminal, a recommended menu including a plurality of official site access information for accessing predetermined content providing servers, respectively;~~

~~receiving means for receiving, from said mobile information terminal, the unique identification information and a request for registering one of said official site access information for accessing said content providing server with a personal menu via the open network~~

~~decoding means for decoding the unique identification information encrypted by a predetermined encryption algorithm and supplied from said mobile information terminal via said open network;~~

~~determining means for determining whether the unique identification information received from said mobile information terminal is registered with said customer database;~~

~~service permission notice sending means for sending a notification to said content providing server, by which said requested site is produced, that starting of service provision~~

for said mobile information terminal be permitted, if the unique identification information is found registered with said customer database ~~by the determining means;~~

~~registering means for registering the requested official site access information with said personal menu after receiving an acknowledgement response of said notification from said content providing server; and~~

~~presenting means for presenting, to said mobile information terminal, a completion of said registration;~~

~~wherein a process in which site access information selected by a user of said mobile information terminal from said recommended menu displayed on said mobile information terminal is registered by the registering means with said customer database in relation with the unique identification information of said mobile information terminal.~~

Claim 10 (Original): The user authentication server according to claim 9, wherein said open network is the Internet, through which the unique identification information is transmitted as encrypted by the predetermined encryption algorithm by a Web browser installed on said mobile information terminal.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The user authentication server according to claim 10, wherein

the unique identification information is read, by said Web browser, from a flash memory installed on said mobile information terminal and the retrieved unique identification information is transmitted as encrypted by the predetermined encryption algorithm by said Web browser.

Claim 12 (Original): The user authentication server according to claim 11, wherein said predetermined encryption algorithm is SSL.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): A user authentication server which executes user authentication between a mobile information terminal and a content providing server interconnected by an open network, comprising:

a registering module configured to register unique identification information corresponding to the ~~hardware of said~~ mobile information terminal received from the mobile information terminal with a customer database of said authentication server;

an interface configured to present, to said mobile information terminal, a recommended menu including a plurality of official site access information for accessing predetermined content providing servers, respectively;

an interface configured to receive, from said mobile information terminal, the unique identification information and a request for registering one of said official site access information for accessing said content providing server with a personal menu via the open network;

a determination module configured to determine whether the unique identification information received from said mobile information terminal is registered with said customer database;

an interface configured to transmit a notification to said content providing server, by which said requested site is produced, that starting of service provision for said mobile information terminal be permitted, if the unique identification information is found registered with said customer database by the determination module;

a registering module configured to register the requested official site access information with said personal menu after receiving an acknowledgement response of said notification from said content providing server; and

an interface configured to present, to said mobile information terminal, a completion of said registration.

Claim 14 (New): The authentication server according to Claim 13, wherein the recommended menu including a plurality of official site access information includes a plurality of hierarchical levels of categories.

Claim 15 (New): The authentication server according to Claim 13, wherein the customer database is configured to store a name, age, birthday, gender and address corresponding to a user.

Claim 16 (New): The authentication server according to Claim 15, wherein the authentication server uses at least one of the name, age, birthday, gender and address corresponding to a user to generate the recommended menu.

Claim 17 (New): The authentication server according to Claim 13, wherein the personal menu includes a plurality of icons, each of which correspond to a link to a website external to the authentication server.

Claim 18 (New): The authentication server according to Claim 13, wherein the authentication server and the content providing server are remotely connected via the Internet.